



HOLLOW EARTH EXPEDITIONS

DEMON BEAR



This Unofficial Adventure may be used as a one-shot journey into the world of *Hollow Earth Expeditions* (created by **Exile Game Studios**) and the Ubiquity system or it may be used as an element in an existing campaign therein.

It is set on a high plateau, but can be anywhere that the plateau will fit within a Game Masters campaign. Please consider that the plateau must be of reasonable size to allow for the sheep farmers to survive with their flocks and the village in the center. The smallest might be about ten square miles.

The Demon Bear portion of the adventure is relatively straight forward, just tough. However, the initial scene in the village of *Tomersom's Wreck* may require some unique or creative Role-Playing in order to save the life of the boy.

Teaser

A Possessed Child. A Missing Hero. Dead Sheep & A Demon Bear. Just Another Afternoon In The Center Of The World.

Adventure Background

The high plateau is home to few wild creatures, mostly small rodents, birds and a few types of herbivores. One type of carnivore does live on the plateau, cave bears. They hibernate in deep caves along the plateau's edge, coming out every few years to eat, mate, bear and raise offspring and then return to hibernation.

Weeks ago a great cave bear was disturbed from it's slumber by a large rat that thought to make a meal of it. Easily killing and eating the rat, the bear was largely uninjured by the attack and went back to sleep. However, the small bites from the rat became infected and a virus took over the slumbering beast.

Awakened in a fevered and delusional state, the beast climbed to the top of the plateau and started attacking anything it came across.

Unfortunately, there are inhabitants on the plateau beside animals. A human settlement, the Village of *Tomersom's Wreck*, has been here for about 70 years.

Now, with reports of attacks by the giant beast, slaughtered and mutilated sheep slowly

appearing everywhere, the people are convinced that a demon, disguised as a great bear, has come to the plateau to destroy them.

About Tomersom's Wreck

The village was founded by the survivors of a surface fishing steamer, *Tomersom's Play* of Miami, after a charter trip suddenly ended when the steamer sailed into a thunderstorm and found itself wrecked upon the plateau.

They formed a new life on top, intermingling with local villagers and strangers who have wandered into the area. Now *Tomersom's Wreck* is a thriving community, based on growing crops, mostly grains, and the domestication of goats and sheep that inhabit the plateau.

The Next Victim

You are traveling along a game trail that runs through the middle of a field of chest high wheat grass. Due to the high altitude of the plateau, and an overcast sky, the air is cool and the temperature barely running into the mid 60's. There are very few scattered trees and shrubs, and only a couple of rocky outcroppings to break up the monotony of the tall grasses.

As you move toward a lone tree, you walk into an area where the grass appears to be chewed down, as if grazed on by cattle. Closer to the tree the area increases. Then you notice a scene of carnage, the ripped up carcass of a goat or sheep, scattered about. Then a second, and a third. In all, you spot over a dozen sheep mutilated. Looking cautiously about you see a man laying in a lump by the tree.

As you rush up to him, he spy's you through bloody eyes and says "please... save us.... from the demon be..." As his words trail off and his last breath leaves his torn body, a terrible howl echoes across the grasses. Long and frightening, a sound so deep that it makes the hair on the back of your neck stand on end. Then it is over, and all is quiet...

Page 2

The beast is actually some

distance away, howling in delusional anger at some unseen threat.

If the characters try and track the beast, it will require a successful (**Tough 3**) **Survival/Tracking** skill check. The creatures tracks are better then a day old, but are massive. Three times larger then any bear on the Surface World. The footprints seem to head out into the wheat grass in the direction of the edge of the plateau.

They can track the beast for 12 hours, finding it's trail goes in a winding path around the plateau, eventually coming to the edge. There, little vegetation and lots of hard rocks make tracking the beast harder. They will need to make another **Survival/Tracking** skill check, this time at a (**Hard 4**)

Despite the carnage, there are still 8 sheep standing nearby, several with blood splattering their tan-colored wool. It is an (**Average 2**) **Animal Handling** skill check to drive the sheep along with the party if they wish.

Any character looking around will see signs of smoke in the distance. The smoke is from the boiler of the *Tomersom's Play* in the village, which the locals still use to produce electricity. The village is about 5 miles away.

Riot In The Wreck

A large sign at the edge of town reads:

*Welcome To
Tomersom's Wreck
Founded August, 1888*

*Population: 93
Peaceful Visitors Welcome.*

The village is a simple collection of about two dozen white "adobe" style buildings, with the central feature being a 60-foot fishing trawler which has been propped upright. Several building are built against it and the drive shaft for the propeller seems to have been modified to run a pump, which seems to be bringing fresh water from an underground source.

As odd as the boat on this plateau is to see,

there are two other things that catch your attention. The first is a group of men and women busy stacking wood against an upright pole. The other is a large group of people crowded around a small building on the edge of the village. The crowd appears to be angry, with constant shouts of "burn him out" and "he'll kill us all."

The crowd is so focused on what is going on within the building that they do not notice the characters approach, seeming more intent on looking through the small windows or doorway.

Anyone making a (**Hard 3**) **Perception** check will mumbled things such as "*filthy orphan,*" "*the demon bear I tell ya,*" "*burn his sheep too,*" "*it's witchcraft,*" or "*we should never have let him live here.*"

If the characters try and push through, the crowd will part and slowly become quiet, everyone mumbling about strangers in town.

The inside of the small building looks more like a converted storage shed with barely enough room for the four men standing inside. Two women are kneeling beside a simple bed, where a young boy, perhaps 12 or 13, is laying. He is tied by leather straps, with his hands and feet being tied to the corner posts. The two women are fearfully tending to him as he thrashes about in an apparent fevered state.

Two of the men appear to be standing guard, one armed with a cap and ball revolver, the other with a long spear. A successful (**Hard 3**) **Perception** check will tell an observant character that the spear head seems to be made of silver. The other two men seem to be arguing as to what to do with the boy. One arguing that he should be burned, while the other insisting he should be thrown from the plateau "...at the great cliff." Every few moments, the boy seems to lash out in a frightening scream, causing everyone in the room to jump in fear.

One of the men is an old man, perhaps in his 80's. He seems strong for his age, and wears a thick white beard and has a faded blue captains hat on. The other man is young, perhaps 30, and

is dressed as everyone else in the village, but is holding a wooden staff capped by a simple silver sphere.

When the two men notice the Player Characters, they will push them out of the building, wishing to talk to them outside.

Once outside, he will address them as John Paul Tomersom, Captain of this village, and wish to know their business here.

If questioned, he will explain that they have been shipwrecked here for 73 years now, late of Miami Florida. Originally, they had 54 crew and passengers, but now have 93 residents due to marriages and a few savages that have joined the community.

He will say that "*...the thing inside the shed is a village matter and not one for strangers.*" If pressed (through the use of **Con**, **Diplomacy** or **Intimidation** skills for example), he will indicate that the boy is a savage orphan who has lived here for several years, but that he has become possessed by a demon and they are debating what to do with him.

He will initially refuse to let anyone, even a "doctor," look at the boy, saying that "leeches and potions" will not drive the demon out. He, nor anyone in town, will believe anything that an "outsider" has to say about the boy, being convinced that he is possessed by some demon.

A successful (**Hard 3**) **Medicine/Disease** skill check will tell the character that the boy is suffering from some form of viral infection, possibly from a massive bite on his shoulder. His condition is worsening and will likely die in a matter of days unless a serum can be produced. To do that, the Doctor will need the infected animal from which to make it.

If examined by a hunter or other nature knowledgeable character with the **Survival/Hunting** or **Science/Biology** skill, then they will be able to determine that the boy was bit by a large long nosed carnivore, perhaps a wolf or bear.

This fact the townspeople

will agree with. They will claim he was found outside of town with the remains of his flock, all slaughtered by the Demon Bear!

If the party brought the remains of the sheep farmer with them, he will be identified as Dodson. They will mourn his loss, but this will only fire anger in the onlookers about the "possessed" boy and the Demon Bear.

The Demon Bear. If asked, everyone has a description and opinion about it. It's 20-feet tall, 2,000 pounds, has fiery red eyes, walks on its hind legs like a man and smells of death. The general opinion of the villagers is that it was sent by some devil to punish them for driving all the bears off the plateau.

They think the beasts sleep for years, then awaken after four or five years and begin hunting. In the early days of the village, bears that live in the caves would awaken and attack the sheep. Since the villagers were trying to domesticate the sheep for food, the bears became a threat. Then one day a great hunt started. The caves were found and the beasts were either burned out, or killed as they slept.

If the characters offer to help with the "demon bear" problem, Captain Tomersom will politely refuse, saying that another has tried and was killed. He does not want the party's blood on his hands.

Almost a week ago, a man riding a rhino-like dinosaur came into town. He wore shiny metal armor, was armed with a musket and a sword and had a great lance. He offered to kill the demon bear for them in exchange for some silver a bag of silver and a bundle of food. When they accepted, he asked a few simple questions, then rode his beast off in the direction of the old priests house which lies a mile outside of town. He has not been seen since.

The Old Priests House. This is the home of Daniel the village Priest. Just a boy when The Play was wrecked, he took on the job of being the villages spiritual advisor. He built his home

about a mile outside of town, where he could quietly

commune with God and Nature. Unfortunately, nobody has seen Daniel is weeks.

If the characters try and use of **Con**, **Diplomacy** or **Intimidation** skills to get the villagers to accept their help, it will require a (**Tough 3**) skill check in order to sway Captain Tomersom to accept their help. The villagers will not let the party take the boy, afraid he might accidentally be turned free, and it will take another roll to convince Tomersom to keep the people from doing anything to the boy for a few days. The best he will be able to guarantee is 24 hours.

With the boy's fate safe for a day, the party is free to hunt the beast down. Their most direct approach is to either start hunting the fields for it, follow the trail left from the last attack or follow up on the missing priest and dinosaur rider.

Lost House of Worship

The "Port Side" trail from town leads out to the old priests home. It takes about 30 minutes to walk the trail, seeing nothing of interest beyond a few wild sheep and an unattended vegetable garden or two.

The house stands just to the right of the base of a great cottonwood tree. A large, adobe brick paved patio covers much of the area, nearly twice as large as the house itself, extends from the front door to around the tree. Simple benches and stools are scattered everywhere, along with a dozens of clay pots in which various herbs are growing (wild onion, black mustard, sage, rosemary, etc). To the right of the house is a simple circular well.

The front door on the house, and the visible windows, have all been smashed in. Massive 5-claw marks, easily 12-inches across, rake the sides and sunlight can be seen through the door, as though part of the roof is missing. A long spear and flintlock musket rest against the front of the house.

Just behind the house can be seen a large dinosaur, like some reptilian rhino, walking

back and forth. The creature appears to be grazing. Several trampled paths in the tall wheat grass lead away from the area.

The inside of the house is partially destroyed as part of the roof and the wall nearest the tree has been caved in. A wool mattress, broken pots and torn pieces of paper are the only things remaining now. Searching the building will find nothing of value, and no signs of the priest Daniel or the hero Gallas beyond some dried blood on one of the interior walls.

Reading over the papers will reveal almost nothing of interest beyond normal church notes (who's fighting with who, who's cheated who, who's cheating on who, etc). There are also notes on the weather, rainfall and gardening. A couple of scattered pages, though, mention reports and concerns over a marauding monster out in the deep fields. One farmer reported seeing a great brown shadow, the size of a trolley car, moving through the fields. There are also several reports of mutilated sheep, strange howls and a missing farmer, Davis Grey.

It is not possible to get a clear picture of the goings on as many pages have been blown away by the winds.

The dinosaur is a Styracosaurus and is the mount of the "Hero" Gallas, who came here almost a week ago. His saddlebags are still on it, as is his bridle setup.

If anyone approaches the Styracosaurus, they will find it docile, being quite content to chew on the large grasses. However, danger lurks nearby. When Gallas came out her, he investigated the house. Finding nothing, he walked around the area and was promptly attacked by the Demon Bear. Although he survived the attack, he was bitten by the beast and now suffers from the virus. He is delusional and is hiding in the tall wheat grass near his mount. Anyone approaching it will cause him to charge out and attack.

As you approach the dinosaur, a bloodcurdling scream suddenly erupts from the tall wheat grass and a tall man, wearing torn

Gallas (Ally 2)

Primary Attributes:

Body 3, Dexterity 2, Strength 4
Charisma 2, Intelligence 2, Willpower 2.

Secondary Attributes:

Size 0, Move 6, Perception 4
Initiative 4, Defense 5, Stun 3, Health 5.

Skills: Animal Handling 5, Brawl 5, Firearms 4, Melee 8, Survival 7.

Talents: Beast Rider (Treat Hostile Mounts As Cooperative Mounts), Robust (+2 Health Rating).

Resources: None.

Flaw: None.

Weapons: Club 10N, Flintlock Musket 7L, Great Sword 13L, Lance 11L, Punch 5N.

Gallas is a wandering adventurer, who works or does favors for the people he finds in exchange for the supplies necessary to continue his travels. He does not wish to "settle down," claiming that he has something important that he must complete (although he will not say what that is except that it is personal). He is bold and strong, believing that the strong should protect the weak and that those that are not strong should remain indoors, out of harms way.

chain armor and carrying a heavy branch, rushes toward you, screaming incoherently as he runs.

This is Gallas. He is armed with a tree branch that he picked up as he has dropped his sword somewhere. His Lance and Musket are in front of the house so he cannot use those either. He will attack anyone who is standing near his mount, constantly changing targets as he goes.

After Gallas is defeated, it is a simple matter to search his mount as it is a peaceful herbivore. Inside the saddle bags characters will find a pouch with 22 additional shots for the musket, weapon cleaning equipment, food, eating kit, flint & steel, water, a jug of clear liquor and a pouch containing several gold nuggets. He also has a bedroll and several sets of clean clothing.

Anyone can attempt to ride the Styracosaurus, but if they do not have the Beast Rider Talent they suffer a -4 (penalty) on all skill checks.

If necessary, use the stats for the **Triceratops (Mysteries of the Hollow Earth 156)** for the Styracosaurus mount.

If Gallas is captured instead of killed, then he is a potential source of problems. Being raving mad from the virus, he will bite, kick and spit on the characters, trying his best to escape any bonds so he can attack again. If he escapes, he will not run far away, staying within sight of his old mount. He will have to be secured very carefully.

Searching about the area, Gallas's Great Sword can be found laying in the wheat grass, undamaged. There does appear to be blood on the blade. A successful (**Hard 4**) **Survival/Tracking** skill check will reveal blood along one of the trails leading away from the house.

Any character who climbs the Cottonwood tree (an Average 2 task) will notice the area crisscrossed with trampled trails. A (**Tough 3**) **Intelligence** or **Survival/Tracking** check will reveal that most of the trails seem to start to converge in one direction. The path with the blood also seems to head in that general direction.

The Cave of Dis-Bear!

After following the trail for a few miles, the bloody trail disappears. It does not appear as though it turned off or was lost, but rather that the injury stopped bleeding.

However, scouting about the area, characters will find that the trail they have been following hooks up with another trail, which appears to be more heavily worn. It is possible to follow this progression of "merging" trails for several miles, until the party comes to a cliff at the edge of the plateau.

see almost a mile down into the mists and trees of a lush jungle. Where the trails meet the cliff there appears to be a ledge, about 5-feet wide. The ledge winds down the cliff and out of sight around a bend. An old sheep's carcass lies near the trailhead, apparently uneaten save by minor predators and insects.

Traveling down the ledge is an easy walk for the most part. It is rough, and broken in places, but still provides enough footing to make the walk without any real effort.

However, just beyond the bend a slide has eroded below and a gap, perhaps 20 feet across, now blocks travel.

Attempting to climb across the gap requires a (**Tough 3**) **Athletics/Climb** skill check. If a character attempts a Run Action (thereby doubling their Move Rating), they still need to make a (**Tough 3**) **Athletics/Jumping** to safely land on the other side. There are no holds higher up with which to create a rope swing. Any character who falls into the gap will suffer 4N damage from sliding down and landing on a rocky ledge 40 feet below.

After crossing, a successful (**Very Hard 5**) **Survival/Tracking** skill check will reveal that this side of the gap does not appear to have been used recently, as if the slide has stopped the beast from returning to the cave.

A hundred feet beyond the gap is a large cave entrance, perhaps 10-feet around. The inside smelling of animal musk. Traveling into the cave is easy, but the walk is filled with bear feces and bat guano, making for a slippery walk. Small cave bats can occasionally be seen clinging to the cave ceiling.

About 80-feet back into the cave the characters will find a dead end chamber. Here, old grass, branches and lots of animal fur block further passage, forming a large, thick natural nest. A successful (**Hard 4**) **Survival/Hunting** skill check will reveal that this nest has been here for years, possibly decades. There is nothing of value within the cave.

When the characters return to the surface,

The drop is almost sheer, and from here the characters can

The Demon Bear (Follower 3)

Primary Attributes:

Body 6, Dexterity 4, Strength 8
Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 6.

Secondary Attributes:

Size 2, Move 11 (22), Perception 8
Initiative 6, Defense 10, Stun 6, Health 15.

Skills: Brawl 13, Stealth 4, Survival 6.

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception Rating),
Die Hard (Does Not Fall Unconscious And Can
Fight Until -7, With Penalty),
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival Rating).

Weapons: Bite 12L, Claw 12L.

jagged rocks on a wide ledge.

Medicine

After the beast has been killed, someone with the Medicine skill will need to recover the correct parts to make the serum with which to cure the boy (and Gallas if he was captured instead of killed).

Collecting the correct materials is an **(Average 2) Medicine/Surgery** skill check. Each point of success above 2 will allow one additional dose to be made, to a maximum of 5 doses. However, making the actual serum is a **(Hard 4) Medicine/Diseases** skill check which requires one hour per skill check, which must be done for each dose being made. Any result of 0 successes means that that dose of materials have been ruined and must be discarded.

Administering the serum is a simple matter of getting the boy (and Gallas) to drink the liquid. Within a day, both will begin to show signs of recovery, Gallas being able to talk within 24 hours. The boy will regain clear mind in about 48 hours. In a week, both will be back to full health, with no signs of the virus.

With the treatment working, Captain Tomersom and the villagers will believe that the boys "possession" is at an end, although some will not believe that it was a virus, but rather that the death of the Demon Bear ended the boys affliction.

They will offer the party the reward that Gallas requested, food, a few days sleep and a pouch of silver nuggets. Gallas they will offer nothing, nor would he accept any rewards since he was unsuccessful. He will simply mount his beast and make for the way off the plateau, offering the party his heart felt thanks for rescuing him.

After recovering, the boy, Thom, will set to work trying to earn enough to trade for more sheep so as to replace his flock. If asked by the party to travel with them, he will politely refuse, indicating that the plateau is his home.

however, read the following:

As you reach the top of the plateau, you notice something odd, a large bolder has suddenly appeared just inside the field of tall wheat grass. In the second that you notice the rock, it suddenly changes, standing up on massive legs. It is a bear, bigger than any you have ever seen, and it looks mad. It's eyes, wide and bloodshot, it's fur damp from sweat, it's muzzle bloody and foaming. The air is filled with a smell like a thousand foul beasts. As it raises up onto it's hind legs, towering more than 20 feet into the sky, it let's out a bloody howl, like the one you heard earlier and staggers toward you...

This is the Demon Bear! It has stumbled upon the party and means to attack this obvious threat. It will attack any creature nearby, but is delusional from the virus and will jump from creature to creature in a random pattern. If provoked, it may even chase characters onto the cliff ledge.

On the ledge, during the battle, it is possible for the bear to lose its balance and fall off. Standing on the ledge while fighting is an **(Average 2** for the Characters/**Hard 2** for the Demon Bear) **Dexterity** check each combat round. Failure means they have fallen off. A character will land on a ledge 10 to 50 feet below, suffering damage accordingly. The Demon Bear will plummet 100 feet, dying on